

Cracked Image

by SAMUEL H. MOFFETT

A member and a descendant of a family of Christian missionaries, Samuel H. Moffett is currently Professor of Church History and Theology at the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea. An alumnus of Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary (Class of '42), he received the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Yale University before going to China as a missionary in 1947. He is the author of two books, Where'er the Sun (Friendship Press, 1953) and The Christians of Korea (1962).

IT used to take considerable courage to go to the mission field. Today it takes as much courage to come home. ^{Proverb} Eighty years ago my father was stoned in the streets of Pyongyang, Korea. But now, a generation later, I feel more jittery on the streets of an American city at night than in any Korean city.

There are other changes. In my father's day coming home was a kind of triumph. The missionary was a hero. Today he is an anti-hero. Even in ^{some} Christian churches I am eyed askance as a throw-back to a more primitive era, to the days of colonialism and cultural aggression and the white man's manifest destiny. We live in a day of the cracking of missionary images.

In the old days, furlough was a temporary withdrawal from the frontier for rest and recuperation in the warm embrace of the heart of Christendom. Christendom does not have a heart any more, geographically speaking, and coming home is more of an icy shock than a warm embrace. I was astounded to find on my way around the world from Korea that there are more Presbyterian churches in the one Korean city in which I work, Seoul, than there are in all of England and Wales combined. Seoul, the Korean capital, has more than a thousand Protestant churches,

and almost two-thirds of them are Presbyterian.

Another shock is to return from the mission field and find Protestant church membership actually declining. United Presbyterians, I am told, lost 77,000 members this last year alone. By way of contrast, out on the mission field, in Korea, the Protestant churches double their membership every ten years. Christian growth rate there is almost 10 per cent a year, which is four times as fast as the population growth. Right through wars and persecutions and economic collapse Korea's Christians have maintained this phenomenal rate of growth for the past three decades.

It makes you wonder just where the mission field is!

But it is not just the mission field that is changing. There are changes in the missionary too. My father was an explorer and a pioneer. On one early trip he walked for 1400 miles through hills and valleys where, for the most part, no Christian had ever been seen. Today, no matter where I go in Korea I am rarely out of sight of a Christian church. And I find it hard to live up to the cherished image of the pioneer when my office on the mission field ^{is still} last year was on the eighth floor of a ten-story building in the tenth largest city

in the world. That building, incidentally, was the Christian Center Building, housing the central offices of some of Korea's major Christian organizations, including the Christian Broadcasting System.

One of my last missionary duties in Seoul before coming on furlough was to sit at a hidden microphone in the Church of Everlasting Joy (Yongnak Presbyterian Church), and while the pastor, Dr. Han Kyung-Chik (Princeton Seminary, '27), preached to his morning congregation of over 10,000 people—2500 in the sanctuary for the three services, and 800 participating by closed-circuit television in the overflow chapel—my task was to translate his sermon into English over an instantaneous communication circuit for the little company of heathen American tourists who see the great crowds on a Sunday morning and wander in to find out what is going on.

I exaggerate. They are probably not heathen. But it is a Korean who is preaching to them, not a Westerner preaching to Koreans. And there, precisely, is the cracking of the image and the reversal of roles which is an increasingly common pattern on the mission field in our time.

This is what has made people say today, "Exactly! The day of the missionary is past. The younger churches have come of age. Now we can get back to our own problems right here in America." What a fatal juxtaposition of false ideas!

In the first place, they are not *America's* problems. They are the whole world's problems. No solution to this world's troubles is ever going to be stamped exclusively, "Made in the U.S.A." Isolationism was never really a

Christian option. Today it is a physical as well as a spiritual impossibility.

Take the problem of race, for example. What sublime folly to think you can isolate the race problem in America, as in some germ-free test-tube, and solve it for yourselves, and let all black Africa go hang. From the Asian point of view, moreover, the American approach in general is all too simplistic. You see it all in blacks and whites, forgetting that most of the world is brown and yellow, and that that world is now beginning to complain of black discrimination against Asians in Africa. In the world as it really is—the *whole* world—everyone is guilty, and no one gets off the hook on the race problem.

Or is it the population problem that you want to get back to, now that you do not have to worry about foreign missions any more? The population problem in America? Your little two hundred million. In Asia it takes only two countries, China and India, to add more than two hundred million people to the world's total population every ten years. If you solve your own little problem, and ignore Asia, you will still soon be crowded off the face of the earth.

Or is it the poverty problem you are worried about? But poverty is not your problem. Your problem is affluence: how to distribute all your American wealth justly and workably. And if you dare to solve that problem in isolation, simply shuffling the wealth around among yourselves, you are heading for disaster. The gap between you, the rich, and the rest of the world that is *really* poor is already so dangerously wide that any further increase of the inequality could pull the world to pieces.

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loon, so completely filled with troubles, and so thoroughly inter-connected, that smoothing out or punching away a problem here simply bulges it out on the other side to come back and hit you again.

Which suggests one reason, at least, why the day of the foreign missionary is not past. No country—and no church—can solve its own problems any more. It must work *with* the rest of the world, and *for* the rest of the world, and *in* the rest of the world.

But one further word must be said. I have been stressing the fact that although national concerns have their urgencies, nationalism alone is not enough. But globalism, alone, will not do either. The Christian church is not the United Nations. To describe the Christian mission, as I have been doing, as a struggle with the rest of humanity toward racial justice, and population control and an end to poverty, is important as a reminder that the mission is as wide as the mercy of God. But the Christian mission neither begins nor ends with these problems. There is a deeper dimension and an added responsibility and a greater hope.

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my in the last ten years. It is a massive, 2300-page survey of Asia's economics and sociology and politics. One thing particularly caught my attention as I browsed through it: the author's ultimate admission that economic, social and political maneuvering is not enough. Social planning did not bring what was planned in Asia. Why? Because the people themselves had not been changed, said Myrdal.

In the last analysis this is precisely what the Christian mission is all about: *changing people*. Christians call it conversion. This, by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit, is our added responsibility. And we point to a greater hope:

"I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God . . . and I heard a great voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people . . . he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. . . .' And he who sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

When God makes all things new, he begins with people.

Nov 10.15

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These are days of great change. ~~It used to take considerable courage to go to the mission field. Today it takes as much courage to come home.~~ Eighty years ago my father was stoned in the streets of Pyongyang, Korea. But now, a generation later, I feel more jittery on the streets of an American city at night than in any Korean city.

There are other changes. In my father's day coming home was a kind of triumph. The missionary was a hero. Today he is an anti-hero. Even in Christian churches I am eyed askance as a throw-back to a more primitive era, to the days of colonialism and cultural aggression and the white man's manifest destiny. ~~Wax~~ We live in a day of the cracking of missionary images.

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But it is not just the mission field that is changing. There are changes in the missionary too. My father was an explorer and a pioneer. On one early trip he walked for 1400 miles through hills and valleys where, for the most part, no Christian had ever been seen. Today, no matter where I go in Korea I am rarely out of sight of a Christian church. And I am

found it hard to live up to the cherished image of the pioneer ^{missionary} when my office on the mission field, last year, was on the eighth floor of a ten-story building in the tenth largest city in the world. That building, incidentally, was the Christian Center Building, housing the central offices of some of Korea's major Christian organizations, including the Christian Broadcasting System.

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In the first place, they are not America's problems. They are the whole world's problems. No solution to this world's troubles is ever going to be stamped exclusively, "Made in the U.S.A." Isolationism was never really a Christian option. Today it is a physical as well as a spiritual impossibility.

Take the problem of race, for example. What sublime folly to think you can isolate the race problem in America, as in some germ-free test-tube, and solve it for yourselves, and let all black Africa go hang. From the Asian point of view, moreover, the American approach in general is all too simplistic. You see it all in blacks and whites, forgetting that most of the world is brown and yellow, and that that world is now beginning to complain of black discrimination against Asians in Africa. In the world as it really is--the whole world--everyone is guilty, and ~~none~~ no one gets off the hook on the race problem.

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There is no such thing as a local problem any more. The world is like a balloon, so completely filled with troubles, and so thoroughly inter-connected, that smoothing out or punching away a problem here simply bulges it out on the other side to come back and hit you again.

Which suggests one reason, at least, why the day of the foreign missionary is not past. No country, and no church, can solve its own problems any more. It must work with the rest of the world, and for the rest of the world, and in the rest of the world.

But one further word must be said. I have been stressing the fact that although national concerns have their urgencies, nationalism alone is not enough. But globalism, alone, will not do either. The Christian church is not the United Nations. To describe the Christian mission, as I have been doing, as a struggle with the rest of humanity toward racial justice, and population control and an end to poverty, is important as a reminder that the mission is as wide as the mercy of God. But the Christian mission neither begins nor ends with these problems. There is a deeper dimension and an added responsibility and a greater hope.

This world is not the work of the church.

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The Kingdom of God encompasses this world but it does not give us it. It is clear that includes not the side of the world.

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In the last analysis this is precisely what the Christian mission is all about. Changing people. Christians call it conversion. This, by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit, is our added responsibility. And we point to a greater hope:

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"I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.. and I heard a great voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.. he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more... And he who sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

~~And~~ When God makes all things new, he begins with people. As long as two out of every three people in the world have never yet been reached with the good news of Jesus Christ the only real and lasting hope for the world - there must be messengers, to tell these 3 billion or more people the good news.

-- Samuel Hugh Moffett
Princeton, N.J.
March 4, 1971

But how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? ^{How beautiful} Blessed are the feet of those who preach the good news. _{Matthew 10: 5}

in the last analysis this is precisely what the Christian mission is all about. Changing people. ^{Christians} You can even call it conversion, ~~if you want~~. This is our added responsibility. Yet not ours alone. ~~There is the deeper dimension. Not national, not global, but cosmic. And the greater hope.~~ And we point to a greater hope.

"I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.. and I heard a great voice from the throne saying 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall ~~be~~ be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. And he who sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

'Behold, I make all things new' And with God, that includes people. People are the greatest obstacle - when they won't change. And the greatest opportunity when they do.

In the second place - the day of the missionary is never over. The rise, the growth, the initiative.

No, I don't think the day of the missionary is over. Last year we received a letter from a Korean presbytery - "We are sorry to hear about your financial distress," I said "You've had to send an missionary home, but we want a missionary and we promise to raise."

And when God makes all things new, He begins with people.

X shall have dominion Over Land & Sea
 Earth, renamed regions Shall be occupied by

- The priority of the Korea ch. is nothing new.
- 1) Koreans always are step ahead of missionary. Same Song Yoon
 - 2) The rise of the ch. does not end the missionary
- "Don't ~~forget~~ ^{forget} with Great Commission
- 3) We work together
 - 1) We have help to contribute - School of Miss
 - 2) We learn from you
- Pastor Son.

"Send more missions!"

Apr 13:8 5X, the same...
Rev. S.S. Bledsoe, I have set...

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Rev. 21: 1-5

It used to take considerable courage to go to the mission field. Today it takes about as much courage to come home. ~~Eighty~~ years ago my father was stoned in the streets of Pyongyang. ¹⁸⁹⁰ But I feel more jittery on the streets of an American city at night than I do in Seoul. In my father's day coming home was a kind of triumph. The missionary was a hero. Today he's an anti-hero. Even in Christian churches I am eyed a little askance as a throw-back to a more primitive era, to the days of colonialism and cultural aggression and the white man's manifest destiny.

(A missionary who began to think he's a hero, with much use given to a lord who, when he became a missionary, emptied himself... and became shocked... not dead...)

Some of that change is good.

Some of that ^{is good}, and ~~some is not so good~~. ~~The change is even deeper.~~ There is a cracking of missionary images, a reversal of roles that I find not so much shocking as stimulating.

In the old days, furlough was a temporary withdrawal from the frontier for rest and recuperation in the warm embrace of the heart of Christendom. Christendom doesn't have a heart any more, geographically speaking, and coming home is more of an icy shock than a warm embrace. When I reached England from Korea I was astounded to find that there are more Presbyterian churches out on my mission field in the city of Seoul, Korea, than there are in all of England and Wales combined. That one Korean city, Seoul, has more than a thousand Protestant churches, and almost two-thirds of them are Presbyterian.

Or take the comparison between Korea and the U.S.A. You live in a land where for the first time in years, Protestant church membership is actually declining. While out on my mission field, Korea's Protestant churches have doubled their membership regularly every ten years, for the ~~past~~ past thirty years, right through wars and persecutions and economic collapse. The Christian growth rate there is almost 10% a year, which is four times as fast as the population growth.

We can forget about church growth if we want - and call it sell-out and success centered. We can go on losing 40,000 members a year if we must insist on Communist suicide to prove we are unselfish and prophetic. But if we do, I'll be glad there will still be a mission field. It makes you wonder just where the mission field is. Presbyterian Korea and Presbyterian America, all it makes you wonder just where the mission field is.

But it is not just the field that is changing. There are changes in the missionary too. On one early exploratory trip in Korea my father walked for 1400 miles, three months, through hill and valley villages most of which had never seen a Christian. By way of contrast, one

of my last missionary duties in Seoul before coming on furlough was to sit at a hidden microphone in the Church of Everalsting Jcy (Yongnak Presbyterian Church), and while the pastor, Dr. Han Kyung-Chik, preached from his pulpit and over closed-circuit television to his morning congregation of over 30,000 people--~~2500 in the sanctuary, 1600 in the overflow chapel~~, and hundreds more overflowing the overflow in the ^{three} services--my task was to translate his sermon into English over the instantaneous communication circuit for the little company of heathen tourists who see the great crowds on a Sunday morning and wander in to find out what is going on.

I exaggerate. They are probably not heathen, ^{from Korea}. But it is a Korean who is preaching to them, not a Westerner preaching to Koreans. And there, precisely, is the cracking of the image, the reversal of roles.

By this time I can almost hear you saying to yourselves, "Aha, this is exactly what we've been thinking. The day of the missionary is past. The younger churches have grown up. Now we can get back to our own problems right here in America." Don't. Don't say it. Don't even think it. What a fatal juxtaposition of false ideas ^{that would be}.

In the first place they are not your problems. They are the whole world's problems. And no solution to this world's problems is ever going to be stamped exclusively, "Made in the USA". Isolationism was never really a Christian option. Today it is a physical as well as a spiritual impossibility. ^{You are closer in Asia today than ever before. You are closer to the heart of the world today than you were in 1945. You are closer to the heart of the world today than you were in 1945.}

Handwritten note: To be a missionary is to be a witness to all values & all the real world in

Or Take the problem of race, for example. They say it's your hottest problem in this country. Well it ought to be, and Christians ought to get hot about it. But what sublime folly to think ^{you} can isolate the race problem in America, as in some germ-free test-tube, and solve it for yourselves, and let all Africa go hang. From the Asian point of view ^{you} are too simplistic about it anyway, seeing it all in blacks and whites, and forgetting that most of the world is brown and yellow. That world, incidentally, is now beginning to complain about black discrimination against Asians in Africa. In the world as it really is--the whole world--nobody gets off the hook on race prejudice.

Handwritten note: As I know it is in America we have the most serious race problem

Handwritten note: 1982 - the 200 million is no longer a WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY.

Or is it the population problem you want to get back to, now that you don't have to worry about missions any more. The population problem in America? Your little 200 million. Why in my part of the world, just two countries, India and China, add more than 200 million people

to the world's population every ten years. What right do you have to talk about a population problem here?

Or is it the poverty problem you are worried about? But poverty isn't your problem. Your problem is affluence, --how to distribute all your American wealth justly and workably. That is your problem, and if you dare to solve it in isolation, simply shuffling the wealth around among yourselves, you are heading for disaster. The gap between you, the rich, and the rest of the world that is really poor is already so dangerously wide, that if you widen it any more you will split the world into raging, clawing war.

People on welfare in Conn live better than 85% of rest of world

There is no such thing as a local problem any more. The world is like a balloon, so completely filled with troubles and so thoroughly inter-connected, that if you smooth out or punch in a problem here only, it will simply bulge out on the other side and come back and hit you again.

And there is no longer such a thing as one-way mission — ^{shoot a} white westerner to the rest of a colored, pagan world. In some ways the pendulum is swinging the other way —

The world is turning pagan — you can't teach Xty in your schools any more. And the rest of the world is finding that paganism simply doesn't satisfy the human heart. The great new fact of our day —

Gunnar Myrdal. Asian Dilemma was published 20 years ago -)
Intro. Profus - How about Myrdal's Asian Drama? Surv. Only to discuss too
late: 3 vols, 2,344 pages. 1968. 25

It is just as important a ^{text as the} book. One Oxford professor calls it one of the only two important books interpreting political economy in the last ten or so years: ① - John Kenneth Galbraith's The New Industrial Society (on Western frustrated affluence), and ② Asian Drama (on Eastern frustrated underdevelopment).

I find it important as a Christian, not just because it is a massive survey of Asian economics and sociology + politics - but because part of its scholarly impact among economists is its rediscovery of the vital role of religion in modernization. We're so used to having sociologists tell us that religion belongs back with the dinosaurs, that it is refreshing to have a man whom his fellow scientists call "a man who may well be the world's top social scientist", flatly say that one of the reasons underdeveloped nations stay underdeveloped is that they have the wrong religion! This helps to explain something that had been puzzling me - why Columbia U's East Asian Inst. wanted lectures on Christianity in Korea.

One economist has said that "reactions to Asian development have gone through three phases since the end of the colonial era in the 1940s.

① The revolution of rising expectations. The 1950s. High hopes.

Do away with laissez-fair capitalism, and law-order colonial guts - take up independent, national planning - will lead inevitably to economic modernization, 15% savings rates, increase, renew the farms, industry will absorb surplus labor etc. The "take-off" is ahead! But it didn't turn out that way in S.E. Asia.

The 1960s.

② The revolution of falling expectations. This is what Myrdal's book covers so carefully. Planning did not bring what was planned. "More planned against than planning" - as how it has been described. What went wrong?

① Population growth - piled up the landless, ate up agric. improvement - despairing drift to cities.

② Locked in social structure - but the elite, who might change the structure, didn't want to.

③ The clearing of the clouds? The 1970s. An agricultural break-through ~~but not described in Myrdal~~. Improved seed, water + fertilizer, has increased yields 5 + 6 times earlier levels. E.g. Pakistan. But this takes us beyond Myrdal. Back to the book!

Myrdal's Thesis — (based on ^{S.E. Asia} India). Why are these countries poor?

Difficult economic situation due to:

- ① Stagnant exports, inadequate foreign aid + investment — restrict development plans + programs.
- ② Lack of foreign exchange — leads to governmental controls over economy.
- ③ Brit "softness" of society + govt. — prevents development + bring corruption.

Solution:

- ① Industrialization — but only in large scale.
- ② Principal resource — people. But: —
 - (a) Not used properly bec. of social institutions that } ① Vested interests at top
 } ② Unhappy masses at bottom
 } ③ Perpetuate incompetence.
 - (b) To use people properly — break down social institutions.
 - (c) Important steps: ① Land reform — agriculture not industry.
 ② Primary education — people not money.

Important insight: unsparring criticism of Western ^{social} scientists + economists who equate development + technology — ignore religion, tradition, class structures + power structures. (like: powerful have power, nothing can be done about it).

"Economic problems cannot be studied in isolation, but only in their demographic, social and political setting." Asia's poverty is not the simple result of lack of capital; it emanates from irrational attitudes and anachronistic situations which stand in the way of progress.

Small elite groups devoted to modernization + planning — imitate West.

Who's to blame — The rich — for not sharing the wealth?

No — "Our poverty is largely of our own making," says an Indian reviewer.

"We don't work; we don't put people to work." What holds down efficiency — lack of stamina, ignorance and the deadweight of tradition.